

VZCZCXRO2070
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #3484/01 3570828
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 220828Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9655
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2295
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 0198
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 1305
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY 0115
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0141
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 3941
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 9524
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 5375
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 1584
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 2150
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHKO/USDAO TOKYO JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 003484

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/TRA (DAS JOHN BYERLY AND S MILLER)
STATE FOR EAP/J COLIN CROSBY
STATE PM/PPA FOR GLANCY
STATE PM/ISO FOR FREDERICK

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: JAPAN'S SEAMEN'S UNION AND SHIPOWNERS URGE ACTION
ON SOMALI PIRACY

REF: A. STATE 126055
[1](#)B. 4 NOV 2008 TOKYO DAILY ACTIVITY REPORT
[1](#)C. 11 DEC 2008 EMBASSY TOKYO DAILY ACTIVITY REPORT
[1](#)D. STATE 129941
[1](#)E. STATE 3405

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) In conjunction with Diet members in the bipartisan Maritime Safety Coalition, the Japan Shipowners' Association (JSA) has lobbied the Japanese government for greater involvement in anti-piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden, a JSA official told Emboffs December 19. The JSA did not formally urge the dispatch of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF), but the JSA's president, during a recent media interview, suggested JMSDF should be engaged. Officials in both the JSA and the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) argue that anti-piracy efforts should be an international matter, but are concerned the issue could get caught in domestic politics, resulting in delayed or blocked action. End summary.

Shipowners Lobby For Anti-Piracy Action

[1](#)2. (SBU) In November, the Japan Shipowners' Association (JSA), accompanied by Diet members of the bipartisan Maritime Safety Coalition, advocated for more active Japanese involvement in anti-piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden. The group lobbied the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), JSA Managing Director Captain Osamu Handa told Emboffs December 19. Handa stated the JSA had not formally urged JMSDF deployment, but JSA President (and President of Kawasaki Kisen Ltd.) Hiroyuki Maekawa had suggested JMSDF

involvement during a recent media interview. "The JMSDF simply being there would be a helpful deterrent," concluded Handa.

13. (SBU) Handa said both ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Diet members have responded to JSA's advocacy efforts, but Handa described the LDP as more engaged on the issue. Piracy is an international concern, emphasized Handa, and should transcend domestic politics. The JSA is careful in its advocacy efforts, however, because it does not want anti-piracy activities to become an issue in Diet debates between the ruling and opposition parties, which would delay or block a Japanese response. Therefore, the JSA is seeking minor policy changes that would enable the GOJ to increase safety for seamen of any nationality.

14. (SBU) Handa elaborated that although the Japanese fleet (ships operated by Japanese shipping companies) consists of 2,300 vessels, only 100 are Japanese-flagged. Current Japanese law and policy -- which covers only Japanese people and property -- leaves out the 2,200 flag-of-convenience Japanese-owned vessels and the over 50,000 non-Japanese seafarers hired by Japanese shipping companies, said Handa.

Union Focused on Broader Japanese Shipping Interests

15. (SBU) Similarly, the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) is concerned about broader Japanese shipping interests and not just Japanese-flagged vessels, JSU International Affairs

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Bureau Director General Hideo Ikeda told Embassies December 19.

By the Union's collective bargaining agreement, the JSU is committed to advocating on behalf of seamen regardless of nationality. Due to its close relationship with the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), the JSU aims to protect its 32,000 Filipino "special members" who work on Japanese-owned vessels. Given the recent dangers posed by piracy, the Philippine government-run Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (PEOA) has begun discussing prohibiting its seamen from working in dangerous areas, said Ikeda. The JSA is also on the verge of limiting its members from working in areas threatened by piracy.

16. (SBU) As it is, "the GOJ response is already too late," said the JSU's Ikeda. But in the absence of greater engagement, the JSA recommends its members do the following to minimize risks when passing through the Gulf of Aden: 1) pass through the established Security Corridor; 2) regularly report their position to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which coordinates with naval forces; 3) navigate for safety (increasing speed, zig-zagging, increasing look-outs, etc.); and 4) establish or update safety procedures and training. Some Japanese-related vessels avoid the Gulf of Aden entirely by going around the Cape of Good Hope, but the JSA estimates this costs JSA members approximately 800 million USD per year, due to bunker fees and the additional 6,500-kilometer distance. Consistent with International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) recommendations, JSA members do not take defensive measures (i.e., carry arms) against piracy.

17. (SBU) Nearly all Japanese exports (99.7 percent or approximately 960 million tons per year) travel by ocean, according to JSA Managing Director Captain Handa, making security of ocean routes a key concern for Japanese exporters.

ZUMWALT